

Fraternity and Sorority Residential Initiative Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Fraternity and Sorority Residential Initiative Committee was convened to examine how the Cornell Greek system can be integrated into the campus-wide Residential Initiative, where the University continues to support a rich range of living options. As Cornell commits to transform the University's own undergraduate residential community, it is essential that revitalization for the Greek system be developed and implemented with equal thought, design, purpose, and commitment.

This document represents a shift in philosophy to a more supportive model that would facilitate the renaissance of these organizations, while maintaining the integrity of student and alumni involvement and governance. It is recommended that the University be more attentive to individual chapter's needs by focusing on more frontline interaction and guidance. This new organizational structure should focus on three areas of need: 1) mentoring
2) cultural/educational programming and 3) chapter facilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A.) Mentoring

- **Alumni Involvement.** Each chapter should recruit an active alumni corporation/advisory group committed to providing a responsible level of planning and funding to maintain safe and satisfactory housing. The group should provide direct alumni leadership support for areas of: scholarship, chapter organization, new member program, recruitment, finance, property management, and alumni relations.
- **Faculty Advisor.** The Office of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs (OFSA) should collaborate with Campus Life to guide development of a faculty advisor program. The chapter should provide the faculty advisor an appropriate budget and dining privileges and the advisor should assist the chapter in developing annual programming goals that include intellectual, cultural, and civic programming. The University should support faculty who offer their time and talents by directly indemnifying those advisors who work with Greek chapters in a comparable manner to those who are affiliated with residence halls (i.e., University indemnification would be confined to educational advice and support provided by the Faculty Advisor, with the understanding that Faculty Advisors will have no role or responsibility whatsoever regarding social, operational, organizational or other aspects or activities of Greek chapters)
- **Staff Support.** A staff support structure should be developed either in the form of a Chapter Live-in Advisor or an OFSA Chapter Services Director.

The Chapter Services Director would have responsibility for providing advisement to a cluster of individual chapters and would be a University employee.

The Live-in Advisor, responsible only to a single chapter, would be an employee of that organization.

Financial support for a Live-in Advisor or a Chapter Services Director should be a condition of participating in the Chapter of Excellence Program.

- **Student Leadership and Development.** Officers and alumni should actively engage the general membership in problem solving and chapter management by establishing a strong committee structure and learning to delegate effectively. Chapter alumni should sponsor an annual chapter retreat focused on goal setting, action plan development, execution, and organizational accountability. The OFSA should work with the College of Human Ecology to develop a credit-bearing course for emerging leaders.

B. Cultural/Educational Programming

- **Cultural/Educational Programming Fund.** A fund, already established, should be enhanced to support cultural programming within the chapters. A committee should be charged with developing and supporting cultural/educational programming within participating chapter houses. Chapters may also apply for funding through Renaissance and the Late Night Activities Programming Fund.
- **Service Projects/Philanthropy.** Greek governing councils should establish an annual fundraising and community service challenge for fraternities and sororities and the OFSA should sponsor training for chapter community service/philanthropy chairs.
- **Diversity.** Cultural and educational programming that fosters greater interchapter relations should be initiated among the pilot chapters. A portion of gifts given to the OFSA should be committed to supporting cultural understanding and racial harmony. Greek alumni, affiliated with the Multicultural Greek community, should be identified by the OFSA to organize and provide support to the Multicultural Greek Letter Council on campus. Interfraternity Council, Multicultural Greek Letter Council and Panhellenic Association should operate in a tri-council governance mode and meet jointly each month.
- **New Member Program.** Alumni and chapter officers should evaluate the effectiveness of the new member program annually, noting the new members' persistence rate and academic achievement. Hazing, as defined in the Campus Code of Conduct and related Greek policies, shall not be tolerated. The OFSA should develop an anti-hazing awareness campaign and should develop a "best practices" manual to illustrate ways for chapters to develop a positive new member program. An OFSA fund should be established for the purpose of providing chapters with seed money for projects that focus on team building, facility improvements, or community service.
- **Regulation and Use of Alcohol.** The Committee recommends that the University help develop alternative space on campus for large social gatherings subject to a University-controlled planning and approval process. Governing councils and alumni must enforce the elimination of alcohol in formal recruitment and new member education activities.

C. Chapter Facilities

- **Quality of Chapter Housing.** Facilities must be safe, appealing and competitively attractive to students making housing choices (Internet connectivity, overall cleanliness, and other amenities for example). It is the responsibility of each chapter, whether University-owned or private, to raise the money for such projects.
- **Alumni Fundraising.** The Committee recognizes that alumni support is integral to the success of the fraternity and sorority system, and recommends that the University assist chapters in further developing an alumni network to meet the organization's financial and leadership needs. In embarking upon the Pilot Program, the University should seek funds from the chapter membership and alumni donations.
- **Chapter Safety and Management.** University-owned houses should install a full fire protection system by 2004. Privately owned houses are strongly encouraged to also follow this course of action. Each facility should have a semi-annual fire safety inspection. Each chapter must have a viable facility corporation.

IMPLEMENTATION

A. Pilot Program.

It is recommended that an initial Pilot Program named "Chapters of Excellence" be established and funded to include a cluster of chapters whose alumni and undergraduates commit to the objectives embodied in the Residential Initiative Report.

- **Participating Chapters.** A group of fraternities and sororities should be eligible to participate in a two-year pilot program. The group should be "clustered" geographically to take advantage of common resources, to coordinate activities, and to facilitate mentoring by Live-in Advisors and/or a Chapter Services Director.
- **Financing Pilot Programs.** Cost sharing by alumni and undergraduates should be required in establishing each Chapters of Excellence pilot group. Funding should be sought to support certain common costs such as the leadership and cultural programming expenses associated with implementing the Pilot Program. Individual participating chapters should establish financing and fundraising strategies to meet their chapter's operating and capital needs.

- **Staffing Pilot Program.** The OFSA staff should be expanded to provide leadership and support for the Chapters of Excellence Pilot Program. Depending upon the individual and collective needs of the chapters in each group, the OFSA must be able to provide the staff leadership required to achieve improvement in the three focused areas of a) mentoring, b) programming, and c) chapter facility management.

B. Broadening Financial Support.

- **Creation of Common Social Space(s).** The Committee recommends that the University and the Greek system work together to create on-campus space to accommodate the larger social gatherings that have become a physical burden and risk management problem for many chapters. A creative solution needs to be found to accommodate large student gatherings and to regulate alcohol under these circumstances.
- **Cultural/Educational Programming Fund.** The Committee recommends substantially expanding the now modest Cultural/Educational Programming Fund through alumni gifts and a contribution by undergraduate members.
- **Greek Alumni Relations and Development Director.** In light of the residential transformation that will occur on West and North Campuses, the Greek system needs to respond in a proportionate manner. The Committee recommends examining the feasibility of creating a position that can bring resources to the Greek system and that can help establish the Chapters of Excellence pilot.

C. Assessment.

Monitoring undertaken initiatives and obtaining empirical evidence in the Greek system to support theoretical assumptions is an area for continued research.

- **Pilot Program Assessment.** A subcommittee of the Fraternity and Sorority Advisory Council should be formed to provide assessment of Greek units that participate in the Pilot Program.
- **Chapter Evaluations.** Chapters that receive a four (4) or five (5) rating two years in succession or that the annual evaluation team has identified as needing improvement, should be placed on probationary University recognition status.

This status indicates that the organization is not in compliance with the University's standards and needs to improve in order to regain full recognition.

- Publication of Chapter Ratings. Chapter ratings of three (3) or higher should be made publicly available.
- Sunshine Rule. The OFSA and student governing councils should make available a summary of chapter judicial findings annually.

I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

A. The Fraternity and Sorority Residential Initiative Committee

The Carnegie Foundation (1998), headed by former U.S. Commissioner of Education, Ernest L. Boyer examined the goals of higher education and concluded that the ultimate purpose of higher education is undergraduate learning (1). This has sparked a nationwide reform effort, particularly at large research universities, that emphasizes student-centered education. In a student-centered context, education is broadened to include good citizenship, ethical development, and cultural appreciation in addition to mastery of one's content area (2). Structuring communities to promote this educational mission is a means toward dramatically enhancing a student's character and intellectual development.

As stated by the University's trustees, Cornell's Residential Initiative "aims to create an environment where the lives of students inside and outside the classroom form a cohesive experience with each part positively reinforcing the other."

The University's ambitious initiative will physically transform the campus residential environment and the on-campus housing options for undergraduates. In addition to the estimated \$242 million of University investment being made in new facilities, the initiative will launch a variety of supportive programs within the residential communities to achieve what President Rawlings describes as an "opportunity to provide the best undergraduate education offered by a research university in America."

The Fraternity and Sorority Residential Initiative Committee (See Exhibits A and B) examined how the Cornell Greek system can be integrated into the campus-wide Residential Initiative, where the University continues to support a rich range of living options. The Committee met six times over the past five months and is pleased to submit its summary report and recommendations based upon its deliberations.

B. Cornell Fraternities and Sororities

1. The Past

Cornell's Greek system has been an integral part of the residential community since the University's founding in 1865 and since its first students were admitted in the fall of 1868. In that year, six fraternal societies were established at Cornell (in order: Zeta Psi, Chi Phi, Kappa Alpha, Alpha Delta Phi, Phi Kappa Psi, and Delta Upsilon). Today, one hundred and thirty-three years later, four of them remain as active chapters. In 1881, Kappa Alpha Theta became the first sorority established at Cornell.

Throughout its earliest history, fraternal organizations were integral to the undergraduate life and activities of students. Cornell's first President, Andrew D. White, had been a member of Sigma Phi at Hobart and a member of both Psi Upsilon and Alpha Sigma Phi at Yale. As an educator, he was opposed to dormitory housing and was an outspoken proponent of the smaller group living environment found in private lodging houses or created in fraternity houses. As early in Cornell's history as 1890, a quarter of its male students lived in the then fourteen established chapters. This is comparable to the twenty-nine percent of undergraduate men that today live in forty-six chapters. Successive Cornell administrations have reaffirmed their support of the Greek system as one of the valued residential options for undergraduate students in contrast to many other educational institutions. Believing that "freedom with responsibility" and self-governance provide a positive learning opportunity in the total educational process, Cornell trustees and administrators have historically supported and encouraged the private Greek system to evolve on its own. This "arms length" approach has had its benefits and shortcomings. It has promoted student initiative and self-governance, but has also led to a declining influence on the quality of the fraternity and sorority experience. Recent empirical studies examining the influence and effect of Greek membership on student development and learning indicate conflicting findings. On one hand, certain aspects of Greek membership are often criticized as being antithetical to the intellectual and academic mission of the institution (3). On the other hand, on campuses where the fraternity and sorority system is well supported and their goals are aligned with the mission of the institution, Greek organizations offer a rich opportunity for student learning (4).

Over the years, this equivocal evidence, gleaned by quantitative analysis and first-hand observation has prompted institutions nationwide to evaluate their Greek system and to work toward realigning fraternities and sororities with academic values (5). In a few cases (e.g., Colby College, Hamilton College, Franklin & Marshall College, and initially, Dartmouth College), the outcome of such evaluations has been to ban or to withdraw recognition of fraternities and sororities on campus. However, in many cases, (Cornell University, Colgate University, Syracuse University, University of Maryland, and Emory University) these reviews have resulted in sweeping organizational reforms in the areas of facility and financial management, residential living environment, social policy, new member recruitment and education, and membership education and programming.

The Committee believes that fraternities and sororities offer an unparalleled opportunity for student involvement and leadership development. Self-governance and community service are the hallmarks of the Greek system and embody the spirit of a student-centered campus. Unfortunately, there are deep-rooted cultural problems such as substance abuse, misogynist behavior, and hazing that belie these organizations' achievements. The

Committee is mindful of the challenges facing the Cornell system, but believes that if properly supported, where chapter members responsibly conform to agreed upon standards, fraternities and sororities can provide a very valuable living-learning option for undergraduates (See Exhibit C).

2. The Present

Cornell's present Greek system is one of the largest in the country with sixty-seven chapters and over fifty-four Greek residences that house approximately fifteen hundred students. Over 30% (thirty-five hundred) undergraduate students belong to the Greek system. Even for those who choose not to join, Greek activities such as formal recruitment and weekend social events impact a large portion of the freshman class. Cornell's Greek system remains one of the few vibrant systems in the northeast and stands as a prominently supported residential option for undergraduate students within the Ivy League.

In 1993, recognizing the historic importance that the Greek system has played in the lives of Cornellians, President Frank H. T. Rhodes and the Cornell Board of Trustees appointed a committee to undertake a review of the Greek system. The specific objective of the study was to define the needs the system required in order to assure its continued relevant role in undergraduate residential life. The University, as an outgrowth of that study, has taken a much more proactive leadership role to support and strengthen the independent Greek system.

The Office of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs (OFSA) has been established under the Direction of an Associate Dean of Students for Greek Life in the Office of the Dean of Students. Greek alumni have raised the funds required to endow the Robert G. Engel Associate Dean position and additional endowment funds to support the programs of that office. A trustee-appointed Fraternity and Sorority Advisory Council comprised of students, faculty, alumni, trustees, and administrators has been appointed which serves in an advisory capacity to the Vice President for Student and Academic Services.

Through a generous \$500,000 supporting gift, the University commissioned the architectural and engineering firm of Einhorn Yaffee Prescott (EYP) to undertake a comprehensive assessment of each of the forty-one fraternity and thirteen sorority houses on campus. The EYP Condition Assessment Report for each facility has provided a guideline for every chapter to utilize for maintenance and capital planning purposes. Alumni and undergraduates now have the engineering information and estimates needed to address their chapter's deferred maintenance problems and plan fundraising programs for facility improvements.

Students have led in the development of *The Strategic Plan* (See Exhibit D), which charts the direction for the system under its valued model of self-governance. The plan provides important "bench marking" in several areas of chapter operations, namely self-governance, social responsibility, facilities and financial management, perceptions,

membership development, leadership and assessment. A yearly evaluation process holds members accountable for their performance and fulfillment of plan commitments.

3. The Future

In assessing the progress and improvements that have been made in the Greek system over the past eight years, the Fraternity and Sorority Advisory Council and the administration believe an important foundation has been established. **However much more needs to be done if the system is to sustain itself as a relevant part of the campus-wide Residential Initiative that is underway.** Many of the principles underlying President Rawlings' Residential Initiative are embraced by the Greek system and mirror the ideals, goals, and objectives of every fraternity and sorority.

The Fraternity and Sorority Residential Initiative Committee was appointed to study and recommend ways in which the Greek system can participate in and benefit from the changes resulting from the Residential Initiative. Two prior residential committees have devoted their attention to planning for the North Campus and the West Campus components of the Residential Initiative. Since the Greek system embraces the single largest aggregation of undergraduate students outside those in University residence, **it is essential that their needs and interests be integrated with the campus-wide initiative.**

Cornell's commitment to build new freshman facilities for first-year students on North Campus and completely replace the six University Halls to create a house system on West Campus for upperclassmen presents a welcome, but substantial challenge to the Greek system. Many of Cornell's Greek houses suffer from deferred maintenance. Many have not made the improvements and capital investments that will be required to assure that they can continue to provide competitive facilities for new members. They must also be prepared either to provide comparable dining facilities and meal programs to those offered on campus or to find a way to integrate campus meal plans into the life of the house. The 1997-98 EYP Study revealed that the aggregate capital needed to address medium-term to immediate facility improvements was approximately **\$39 million** (including costs for updating fire safety systems). An additional estimated **\$12 million** is needed to complete "suggested" or "desired" improvements.

The adopted *Strategic Plan* provides every chapter with the framework for developing and executing a program to enrich the living-learning experience at Cornell. But while the plan provides the template, much work remains to be done to achieve, in execution, the objectives defined in the plan. One of the great educational opportunities provided within the Greek system is the opportunity for self-governance and the development of organizational success through group cooperation and leadership. **The system requires access to additional "mentoring" if the full potential of this opportunity is to be realized for all chapters.**

To remain vital, relevant, and competitive in the evolving residential campus environment, the Committee has made a number of specific recommendations to be implemented as part of the Residential Initiative Plan. These recommendations set high

expectations that seek to address areas of concern in the present fraternity and sorority system and propose programmatic changes to effect improvement in the chapter living and learning environment in a manner consistent with the objectives of the Residential Initiative. **As Cornell commits to transform the University's own undergraduate residential community, it is essential that improvements and a transformation for the Greek system be developed and implemented with equal thought, design, purpose, and commitment. If this does not occur, the Greek system may languish and fail in its opportunity to remain a dynamic part of the Cornell educational experience.**

The recommendations in the balance of this report focus on three areas of need: (1) Mentoring (2) Cultural/Educational Programming and (3) Chapter Facilities. Initially, the Committee proposes that representative chapters be selected to participate in a pilot program to implement a set of recommendations that can better support and align chapters with the campus-wide Residential Initiative. These pilot chapters will lead the way, but it is anticipated that others will follow. The guide for chapter success is presented in *The Strategic Plan*. Adopting report recommendations will serve to illuminate components of the Plan for the chapter. Finally, and important to all of the recommendations is a requirement for increased involvement and support from Greek alumni of every chapter.

II RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Mentoring.

The integrity of student involvement and self-governance should be maintained, but training and support for students needs to be strengthened by engaging faculty, alumni, and staff mentors.

Recommendation:

1. Alumni Involvement.

An organized, active, and effective alumni body is a critical element in building and maintaining individual undergraduate chapters and sustaining a strong Greek system on the Cornell campus. Currently, approximately half of Cornell's fraternities and the majority of its sororities have active and effective alumni organizations that provide positive leadership and support to their undergraduate members. This means that **half** of the chapters lack that required positive alumni involvement. It is especially evident in view of the competitive dynamics presented by the University's Residential Initiative that individual chapters and the system as a whole need to mobilize and engage their alumni in a program of equal and effective support and improvement. Each chapter should therefore:

- a. Recruit an active alumni corporation/advisory group/graduate chapter that is organized and held accountable to provide the support and leadership required to meet the chapter's

agreed upon strategic plan.

b. Commit to provide a responsible level of planning and funding to maintain safe and satisfactory housing for its undergraduate members. OFSA and other Cornell resources are available to assist in fulfillment of this requirement.

c. Provide direct alumni leadership support (chapter advisor) for its undergraduate members, including the areas of: scholarship, chapter organization, new member program, recruitment, finance, property management, and alumni relations.

d. Focus on the new member experience, and with the undergraduates, evaluate the overall effectiveness of the new member program.

e. Appoint an alumnus/a to represent its chapter in the programs and activities of the Alumni Interfraternity Council and/or the Alumnae Panhellenic Council.

f. Educate undergraduate members as future alumni supporters of the chapter and foster dedicated undergraduate involvement that appreciates the life-long commitment of members to the organization.

Recommendation:

2. Faculty Advisor.

The underlying purpose of the Residential Initiative is to connect faculty and students in a meaningful way outside of the classroom and should be based on the educational mission of the organization and the University. Broadly stated, the faculty advisor's role is to work with the chapter by promoting a culture that helps to integrate students' academic and personal experience.

a. The Office of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs (OFSA) should collaborate with Campus Life to guide development of a faculty advisor program. The faculty advisor should work primarily with the chapter officers and have monthly interaction with the chapter.

b. The advisor should assist the chapter in developing annual programming goals that include intellectual, cultural and civic programming.

c. The chapter should provide the advisor with an appropriate program budget and dining privileges.

d. The University should support faculty who offer their time and talents by directly indemnifying those advisors who work with Greek chapters in a comparable manner to those who are affiliated with residence halls (i.e., University indemnification would be confined to educational advice and support provided by the Faculty Advisor, with the understanding that Faculty Advisors will have no role or responsibility whatsoever regarding social, operational, organizational or other aspects or activities of Greek chapters.) In addition, the faculty advisor should be named as additional insured on the chapter liability insurance policy.

Recommendation:

3. Staff Support.

Because most chapter alumni do not live in Ithaca, and they do not usually have day-to-day interaction with the undergraduates, we recommend that a support structure be developed to provide chapters with assistance in managing operations, overseeing facility and financial matters, and developing programming for members. **Providing this staff support is a condition of participating in the Fraternity and Sorority Residential Initiative Pilot Program.**

a. **Live-in Advisor.** The optimal situation is for the chapters to have a Live-in Advisor who mentors the undergraduate group. The Live-in Advisor should not be a disciplinarian; a well-functioning chapter should have an internal chapter judicial process to mediate a member's breach of chapter standards. The Live-in Advisor should be an employee of the chapter/alumni and should be named as an additional insured on the organization's liability insurance policy. Each organization should develop a Live-in Advisor job description that relates to assisting chapter officers with managing the facility and chapter operations.

b. **Chapter Services Director.** For chapters that cannot, or choose not to have a Live-in Advisor, the Committee recommends that the University and the Greek system support a group of Chapter Services Directors. Each Director should work with a cluster of individual chapters as an extension of the advisor role that the OFSA staff provides now. The Chapter Services Director should focus on mentoring the elected chapter leadership in fulfilling their responsibilities of governance. As we transition from the pilot phase to system-wide implementation, it is likely that staffing in the central OFSA should shift to a structure that is more supportive of individual chapter's needs. In the new model there would be more frontline Chapter Services Directors, working with a group of chapters and fewer mid-management staff within the OFSA. This new organizational structure is intended to complement the organizations' self-governance structure and collaborate with alumni and Inter/National advisors. The OFSA should hire and train the Chapter Services Directors whose areas of specific support should include (See Exhibit E for draft position description):

- Assisting the chapter in defining community standards and in developing programming.
- Serving as a liaison to the alumni group.<
- Working closely with all executive chapter officers, alumni advisors and faculty advisors.
- Advising house managers in checking students in and out of the facility and in working with students to oversee facility maintenance.

c. **Inter/National Office Partnership.** Most Cornell chapters are members of national fraternal organizations and, therefore, share in a unique network with a large group of other professionally supported inter/national parent organizations.

- To gain greater insight into the policy development of inter/national organizations and the role they play in assisting the Cornell Greek system, a position should be

created on the Fraternity and Sorority Advisory Council for a Fraternity or Sorority Inter/National Officer Representative.

Recommendation:

4. Student Leadership and Development.

Student involvement and leadership development is a cornerstone of the fraternity and sorority experience. Chapter leaders, especially chapter presidents, have a tremendous amount of responsibility and contribute countless hours to overseeing their organizations. We look to student leaders to implement positive programming, and thus require officers to attend several leadership development programs to better prepare them for their role. While current leadership programs are successful in targeting executive officers, often that information and intervention does not trickle down to the broader membership resulting in an awareness gap between chapter presidents and members-at-large.

Given this, it is recommended that:

- a. Officers and alumni should actively engage the general membership in problem solving and chapter management by establishing a strong committee structure and learning to delegate effectively.
- b. Chapter alumni should sponsor an annual chapter retreat for all members that focuses on goal setting, action plan development, execution, and organizational accountability.
- c. Chapter alumni should hold regular conference call meetings with the undergraduate executive board to discuss chapter operations and ongoing issues.
- d. Chapter alumni should help chapter leaders establish officer transition materials and training opportunities such as position descriptions, chapter protocols, and an opportunity for chapter officers to receive training before assuming office.
- e. The Office of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs should work with the College of Human Ecology to revise the ILR/HR Leadership Seminar from a semester-long class to a three to four day credit-bearing course for emerging leaders.

B. Cultural/Educational Programming.

Peer cultures that promote student learning and development emphasize civic responsibility, ethical development, professional exploration, student-faculty interactions, and cultural programming. Working with faculty advisors, alumni, and staff advisors, each chapter should develop and feature educational, cultural and community programs that are an integral part of chapter life.

Recommendation:

1. Cultural/Educational Programming Fund

A fund, already established, should be enhanced as a means of supporting cultural programming within the system. A student-led, but staff, faculty and alumni supported

committee, should be charged with developing and supporting cultural/educational programming within participating chapter houses. In addition, chapters may apply for funding through Renaissance and the Late Night Activities Programming Fund.

Recommendation:

2. Service Projects/Philanthropy

Civic responsibility is an integral component of a learning community, and service to others and philanthropy is a fundamental principle for many Greek-letter organizations. To further integrate and strengthen the commitment to service and philanthropy, it is recommended that:

- a. Greek governing councils should establish an annual fundraising and community service challenge for fraternities and sororities.
- b. The OFSA should sponsor training for chapter community service/philanthropy chairs and council executive officers charged with organizing community service events.
- c. Each chapter should make service to the community an expectation of membership, where members actively engage in service to the community on an annual basis.

Recommendation:

3. Diversity

This committee supports freedom of association, but recognizes the value of a chapter promoting a diverse membership that is based on mutual support and respect.

- a. **Interfraternity Council, Panhellenic Association, and Multicultural Greek Letter organizations should be included in the pilot chapters selected to participate in the Chapters of Excellence Program. Cultural and educational programming that fosters greater interchapter relations should be initiated among these groups.**
- b. A portion of gifts given to the OFSA should be committed to supporting programming related to promoting greater cultural understanding and racial harmony.
- c. The tri-council governance mode should continue to be supported whereby the Interfraternity Council, the Multicultural Greek Letter Council, and the Panhellenic Association meet jointly each month.
- d. An award should be established and presented at the annual awards ceremony to recognize chapter(s) that embraced the *Open Doors, Open Hearts, Open Minds* philosophy through educational programming and community service.
- e. Greek alumni, affiliated with the Multicultural Greek community, should be identified by the OFSA to organize and provide support to the Multicultural Greek Letter Council on campus.

Recommendation:

4. New Member Program.

Improving the quality of the first-year experience for Cornell students is a University priority which extends to the fraternity and sorority system, since one-third of the freshman class joins the Greek system. The primary goal of the new member program must be an affirming one. It is designed to provide students with an experience that enhances their academic success, is ethical and respectful in nature, promotes service to the community, and integrates the new members into the chapter without emphasizing class distinctions.

a. Hazing, as defined in the Campus Code of Conduct and related Greek policies, shall not be tolerated. Hazing is the single most serious threat to the fraternity and sorority system. It counteracts all positive aspects of fraternal organizations that we aim to reinforce such as developing small group living environments, establishing friendships, and emphasizing student governance.

b. Alumni and chapter officers should evaluate the effectiveness of the new member program annually, noting the new members' persistence rate and academic achievement. Alumni and inter/national headquarters staff should have a copy of the new member program that is submitted to the OFSA, and alumni advisors should participate in and monitor initiation activities.

c. The OFSA should work with the undergraduate and alumni leadership to devise an anti-hazing awareness campaign for the entire community including other campus constituencies (students, faculty, staff, parents, and alumni).

d. The OFSA should develop a "best practices" manual to illustrate ways for chapters to develop a positive new member program. In addition, chapters are encouraged to develop group projects that focus on team building, facility improvements, or community service. An OFSA fund should be established for the purpose of providing chapters with seed money for such projects.

e. The OFSA and governing councils should undertake an independent, continuing study of the qualitative experience of first-year students who join Greek-letter organizations and assess the effect of Greek membership on GPA and retention.

Recommendation:

5. Regulation and Use of Alcohol.

Based upon registered fraternity and sorority events, approximately 3,500 undergraduates socialize in fraternity houses each weekend, making the system a primary part of the campus social fabric. Evidence suggests that some chapter events may not be registered properly and some are held in off-campus annexes (Core Alcohol and Drug Survey, 2000). Registered social events are the primary on-campus source of alcohol for undergraduates, including first-year students.

The committee recommends that the University recognize the far-reaching effect of the Greek social system on the campus climate and continue to support and implement strategies that address the legal regulation of alcohol, emphasize harm reduction strategies, and support strategies in line with the University's objectives and responsibilities.

- a. Chapters shall continue to register events through the OFSA and utilize the third party catering system.
- b. The OFSA should continue to provide training for social chairs and caterers related to the Greek Social Policy, security, and registration procedures.
- c. **The University should help develop alternative space on campus for large social gatherings subject to a University-controlled planning and approval process.** There is an urgent need to provide suitable physical space to accommodate the large aggregation of students that frequently overcrowd the existing accommodations of most chapters. Providing designated common community space appropriate for carefully scheduled, large social gatherings would greatly reduce and control the wear and tear now occurring in many houses. The availability of this type of common space would also facilitate better risk management practices. Use of this space could be "rationed" and rotated equitably on a scheduled basis, reducing the frequency of very large parties. New protocols should be established which encourage smaller group social interaction where alcohol may be part of the social occasion, but not the central focus of the event.
- d. Chapters should augment alcoholic events with non-alcoholic events and strive to increase the number of cultural/educational programming events held each semester.
- e. **Governing councils and alumni must enforce the elimination of alcohol in formal recruitment and new member education activities, and develop programs and protocols for insuring constructive activity and behavior during the entire recruitment and new member period.**

C. Chapter Facilities.

Over 1,500 students live in Greek residences, and there is an estimated \$51 million of deferred maintenance needed to improve existing Greek facilities. Approximately \$7 million of that is needed to improve the fire protection systems for all Greek houses. The ultimate desire of this committee is that Greek chapter houses are aesthetically and functionally similar to the University residence halls (Internet connectivity, overall cleanliness, and other amenities, for example).

Recommendation:

1. Quality of Chapter Housing

The committee contends that campus-housing options may be varied, but they should be comparable in terms of quality. The underlying operating support of Greek housing is generated through student rents, fees, and alumni donations. It is recommended that organizations examine their facility operating and deferred maintenance costs and adjust rents as needed to meet expenses. The responsibility for maintenance, refurbishing, and capital improvements of chapter properties lies with the organization's members and alumni.

Recommendation:

2. Alumni Fundraising

Recognizing the independent nature of these organizations, and that many chapter houses are privately owned, the Committee recommends that a sub-committee of the Fraternity and Sorority Advisory Council convene to establish fundraising goals that distinguish between chapter facility, program, and system needs. **This committee should work closely with the Alumni Affairs and Development staff to design an alumni development and fundraising strategy for the fraternity and sorority system. Additionally, this effort should be included in the University's fundraising for the Residential Initiative programming support.**

Recommendation:

3. Chapter Safety and Management

- a. University-owned houses should install a full fire protection system by 2004. Privately-owned chapters are strongly recommended to follow this course of action.
- b. Each facility should have a semi-annual fire safety inspection.
- c. Each chapter must have a viable facility corporation that:
 - Establishes a long-range facility and financial plan and raises the financial resources necessary for addressing low, medium and high facility priority needs on a scheduled basis.
 - Conducts an annual business meeting with the alumni membership.
 - Oversees routine maintenance of the facility.
 - Communicates monthly with the undergraduates by telephone or e-mail on chapter management matters.
 - Assists the chapter in optimizing the space available and establishes room/board fees necessary to cover operating costs and required reserves.
 - Provides chapter guidelines for how space is used for social events with alcohol.
 - Develops and oversees a check in/check out facility procedure for periods of academic recess.

III. IMPLEMENTATION

A. Pilot Program

It is recommended that an initial Pilot Program named "Chapters of Excellence" be established and funded to include a group of chapters whose alumni and undergraduates commit to put into actual practice the recommendations outlined in the Residential Initiative Report. Leadership for Chapters of Excellence must come from the undergraduates and the alumni with support from the staff of the OFSA. The ultimate strength of Cornell's Greek system rests in the hands of the undergraduates as they assume and exercise the responsibility of self-governance. The alumni and the University must provide active and positive support of this process.

1. Participating Chapters

A group of fraternities and sororities should be eligible to participate in a two-year Pilot Program. The group should be "clustered" geographically to take advantage of common resources, to coordinate activities, and to facilitate mentoring by Live-in Advisors and/or a Chapter Services Director.

2. Financing Pilot Program

Cost sharing by alumni and undergraduates should be required in establishing each pilot group. University assistance, as part of the fundraising for the Residential Initiative, should be sought to support certain common costs such as the leadership and cultural programming expenses associated with implementing the Pilot Program. Individual participating chapters should establish financing and fundraising strategies to meet their chapter's operating and capital needs.

3. Staffing Pilot Program

The OFSA staff should be expanded to provide leadership and support for the Chapters of Excellence Pilot Program. The Program should require recruitment and training of Chapter Services Directors. Depending upon the individual and collective needs of the chapters in each group, the OFSA must be able to provide the staff leadership required to achieve improvement in the three focused areas of a) mentoring, b) programming, and c) facility management.

B. Broadening Financial Support.

Individual chapters and the campus Greek system will not prosper at Cornell without better, broader, and deeper financial support. Undergraduates must manage chapter activities more effectively to cover operating costs and maintain reserves. Alumni must provide the financial planning, development, and fundraising required to support chapter program activities and to meet capital improvement needs.

1. Meeting Chapter Capital Needs

The physical surroundings of a fraternity or sorority reflect on the values and traditions of the organization. Facilities must be safe, appealing and competitively attractive to students making housing choices. Following the 1998 EYP facility assessment of all chapter houses on campus, approximately \$51 million of needed renovations and capital improvements was estimated to bring chapter houses up to acceptable standards. It is the responsibility of each chapter, whether University-owned or private, to raise the money for such projects. Some chapters have successfully moved ahead to complete renovations but a majority of chapters have yet to address their facility needs. Every chapter alumni group must take active responsibility for planning and meeting the capital needs of its chapters.

2. Creation of Common Social Space(s)

The Committee recommends that the University and the Greek system work together to create on-campus space to accommodate the larger social gatherings that have become a physical burden and risk management problem for many chapters. A creative solution needs to be found to accommodate large student gatherings and to regulate alcohol under these circumstances. Availability and proper management of such space accompanied by "rationed" use and careful scheduling could reduce the frequency and difficulties associated with large party gatherings.

3. Cultural/Educational Programming Fund

The Committee recommends substantially expanding the now modest Cultural/Educational Programming Fund. Annual support for this fund would be solicited from alumni and could be augmented with a contribution from chapter members. Requests for funding would be directed by individual chapters or by a group of chapters to the OFSA that would fund worthy projects that broaden the cultural and educational content of chapter programs.

4. Greek Alumni Relations and Development Director

In view of the residential transformation that will occur on West and North Campuses, the fraternity and sorority system needs to respond in a proportionate manner. The committee recommends examining the feasibility of creating a position that can bring resources to the Greek system and that can help establish the Chapters of Excellence pilot.

C. Assessment.

While there is an abundance of research available on the positive effect of residential learning communities, less is known about the effect that similar programming can bring to the fraternity and sorority system. Monitoring initiatives and obtaining empirical evidence in the Greek system to support theoretical assumptions is an area for continued research.

1. Pilot Program Assessment

A subcommittee of the Fraternity and Sorority Advisory Council should be formed to provide assessment of Greek units that participate in the Pilot Programs and/or implement these committee recommendations. Assessment should be shared on an annual basis with the Greek community and with the University executive staff.

2. Chapter Evaluation.

Chapters that receive a four (4) or five (5) rating two years in succession or that the annual evaluation team has identified as needing improvement, should be placed on Probationary Recognition. Probationary Recognition status indicates that the organization is not in compliance with the University's standards and needs to improve in order to

regain Full University Recognition. The chapter alumni and student leadership must meet with a subcommittee of the Fraternity and Sorority Advisory Council and present a Chapter Improvement Plan before having full recognition restored. Failure to implement the plan by the end of the year is grounds for revoking chapter recognition.

3. Publication of Chapter Ratings

Following the end of year rating process, chapter ratings of three (3) or higher should be made publicly available. In establishing a strategic planning and assessment process for every chapter, it is important that the results of this annual process be publicized so that participants and the general Cornell community can appreciate the system's commitment to planning, benchmarking, and accountability.

4. Sunshine Rule

The OFSA and student governing councils should make available a summary of chapter judicial findings annually.

NOTES

1.) From *Good Practice in Student Affairs: Principles to Foster Student Learning* (p. 12), by G.S. Blimling and E.J. Whitt and Associates, 1999, San Francisco, CA; Jossey-Bass Publishers.

2.) Ibid., p. 13.

3.) From "Greek Values and Attitudes: A Comparison with Independents," by J.L. Baier and E.G. Whipple, 1990, *NASPA Journal*, 28 (1), pp. 43-53;
"Fraternities, Sororities and Binge Drinking: Results From a National Study of American Colleges," by H. Wechsler, G.D. Kuh and A.E. Davenport, 1996, *NASPA Journal*, 33 (4), pp. 260-279.

4.) From "The Impact of Fraternity or Sorority Membership on Academic Involvement and Learning Outcomes," by G.R. Pike and J.W. Askew, 1990, *NASPA Journal*, 28, pp. 13-19; "Greek Affiliation and Attitude Change: Developmental Implications," by L. Jakobsen, 1986, *Journal of College Student Personnel* 27, pp. 523-527;
"Fraternities and Sororities: Lessons from the College Experiences Study," by G.D. Kuh and J.W. Lyons, 1990, *NASPA Journal*, 28, pp. 20-29.

5.) From "The Report of the Trustee Commission on Campus Life," Colby College, 1984;
"Report of Student Life Committee," Franklin and Marshall College, 1988;
"Report of the Special Committee on Residential Life to the Colgate University Board of Trustees," 1990;
"Greek Relations Committee Report," Cornell University: 1994;
"The Syracuse University Greek System Review," 1995;

"Greek Life: A Foundation for the Future," University of Maryland, 1995;
"Emory University Phoenix Plan," 1999;
"Recommendations Submitted to the Board of Trustees," Dartmouth College Committee
on Student Life Initiative, 2000.